

**Guiding Principles for
Named Training and
Competency Officers
(NTCO), Named
Information Officers
(NIO) and Home Office
Liaison Contacts (HOLC)
working under the
Animals (Scientific
Procedures) Act 1986**



**LABORATORY
ANIMALS
VETERINARY
ASSOCIATION**
A division of the
British Veterinary Association



Institute of
Animal Technology

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Glossary

ASC	Animals in Science Committee
ASPA	Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
ASPeL	Animals (Scientific Procedures) e-Licensing
ASRU	Animals in Science Regulation Unit
AWERB	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body
CoP	Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
The Guidance	Home Office Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986
HOI	Home Office Inspector
HOLC	Home Office Liaison Contact
HOLTIF	Home Office Liaison, Training and Information Forum
IAT	Institute of Animal Technology
LASA	Laboratory Animal Science Association
LAVA	Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association
NACWO	Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer
NIO	Named Information Officer
NPRC	Named Person Responsible for Compliance
NTCO	Named Training and Competency Officer
NVS	Named Veterinary Surgeon
PEL	Establishment Licence
PELH	Establishment Licence Holder, also referred to as ELH
PILH	Personal Licence Holder
PPLH	Project Licence Holder
SPoC	Single Point of Contact
Three Rs/3Rs	Replacement, Refinement and Reduction

Introduction

The Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (as amended in 2012 to take account of the requirements of European Directive 2010/63/EU) requires that the following persons are identified on the Establishment Licence:

1. **Named Person Responsible for Compliance (NPRC):** to ensure that the requirements of ASPA and the conditions of the establishment licence are complied with (this will usually be the Establishment Licence holder);
2. **Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS):** a designated veterinarian with expertise in relevant experimental animal medicine, charged with advisory duties in relation to the well-being and treatment of the animals. Exceptionally, a suitably qualified expert may be appointed where more appropriate;
3. **Named Animal Care & Welfare Officer (NACWO):** responsible for overseeing the welfare and care of the animals in the establishment;
4. **Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO):** responsible for ensuring that staff are adequately educated, competent and continuously trained and that they are supervised until they have demonstrated the requisite competency; and,
5. **Named Information Officer (NIO):** to ensure that staff dealing with animals have access to information specific to the species housed in the establishment.

The NTCO and NIO are new roles.

- Establishments normally also have a Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC). Though not legally required, this administrative management position can act as the central point of communication with the Home Office and facilitate the smooth running of the licensing system in an establishment. This role replaces that of the Home Office Liaison Officer (HOLO).

The Establishment Licence Holder is responsible for the appointment and performance of Named Persons (Section 2C Establishment Licence condition (PEL) 15)), and has a key role in supporting the Named Persons and HOLC and determining **HOW** these role requirements can be achieved efficiently and effectively.

Ultimately the PELH must satisfy themselves that the local systems developed by the Named Persons meet the requirements under the Act.

One of the key tasks of the AWERB is also to support Named Persons (and other staff dealing with animals) on animal welfare, ethical issues and the provision of appropriate training. A good level of communication and engagement with the AWERB will help the NTCO, NIO and HOLC to fulfil their roles.

This LASA/LAVA/IAT guidance document is intended to assist individuals with responsibilities

under or related to ASPA - whether new to their role or already carrying out their roles. It will also assist others such as the Establishment Licence Holder, AWERB members, Named Persons, managers etc. to understand the role of the NTCO, NIO and HOLC and therefore how they can assist the individuals performing these functions.

Many individuals and bodies, including the AWERB, will be involved in determining how the Named Person roles work within each establishment's infrastructure. It is useful to document formal discussion and activities around establishing and reviewing these processes.

Key points:

Each Named Person needs to know their role, and be able to effectively communicate as necessary with other Named Persons and others in the animal research community within the Establishment.

Roles should be properly resourced and supported by senior management.

Establishment Licence Holders should define and agree a functional framework for their own establishment so that all individuals with responsibilities under ASPA are aware of the role and responsibilities of the Named Persons.

The Home Office Guidance on the Operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (March 2014)¹ (referred to in this document as the Guidance) provides guidance on the administration and enforcement of ASPA. The Guidance provides advice on the roles and responsibilities of the Named Persons (see Chapter 8), and highlights their importance within the establishment to assist the Establishment Licence Holder (PELH) in fulfilling his/her responsibilities. The Guidance also makes suggestions on training (see Chapter 9).

The Institute of Animal Technology and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons have updated their own guidance for NACWOs and NVSs respectively (see References) to take account of the changes introduced under the revised ASPA.

The purpose of this LASA/LAVA/IAT document is to provide additional practical advice on how the new roles of NTCO and NIO, as well as that of HOLC, can be implemented. It takes account of the Guidance, and the Education and Training Framework document² published by the European Commission. (It was informed by discussions and presentations at the Named Persons' Meetings convened by LASA, LAVA and IAT in 2014 and 2015).

This guidance has been written and structured with the expectation that some readers may not necessarily read the entire document but may refer to specific sections relevant to their role. It will be reviewed and updated as experience of these roles develops.

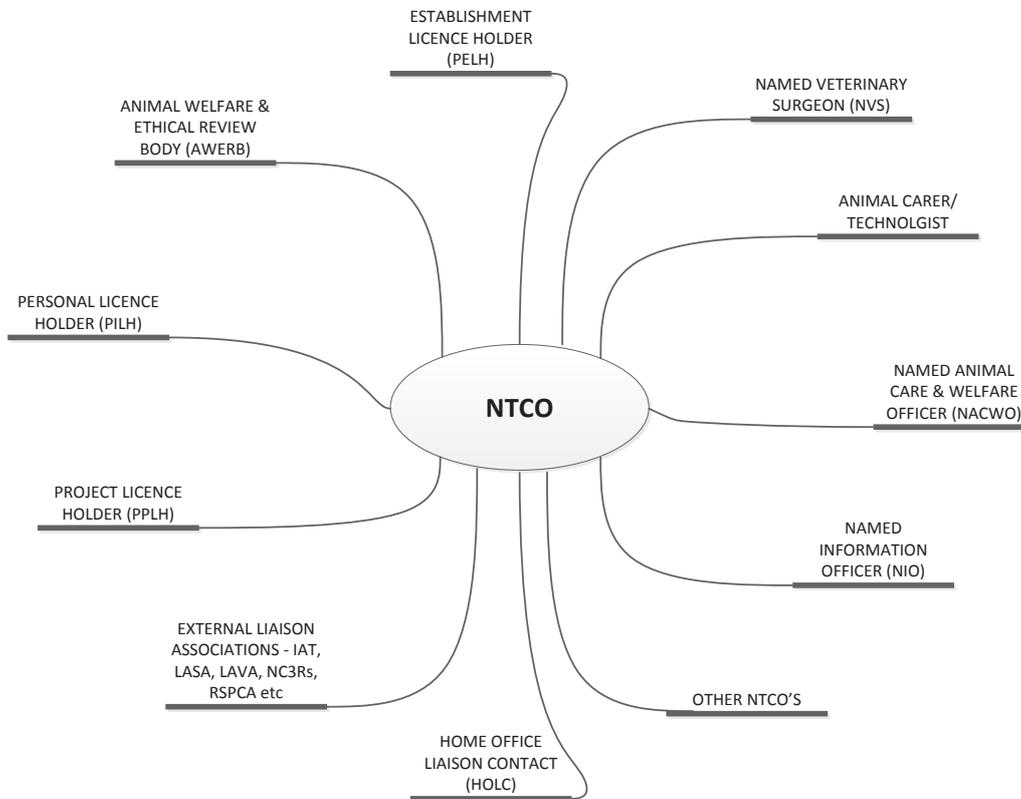
¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/operation-of-aspa>

²http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/pubs_guidance_en.htm

Named Training and Competency Officer

What is the job? What are the responsibilities?

Interactions of the NTCO



The Establishment Licence Holder should support the NTCO to determine **HOW** the requirements set out by the Home Office (see the Guidance - Chapter 8.9) can be achieved efficiently and effectively. **The NTCO role needs to be properly resourced and supported by senior management** to ensure that training requirements for all staff are met.

The Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO) is responsible for ensuring that all those dealing with animals are adequately educated, trained and supervised until they are competent and that they continue to undertake appropriate further training to maintain their expertise.

Core Role:

- Setting local standards
- Applying local standards
- Record systems
- Supervision & Competence Assessment
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Review
- Communications

The role of NTCO may be a stand-alone defined position within an establishment. In some cases, it will be undertaken (where there are no conflicts of interest) in combination with other roles. In a large establishment, the role will often be undertaken by different persons at different sites or for different species. Where more than one person is tasked with this role it is important that they all work as a team, closely together, to the same principles and standards, but that division of responsibility is clear. Oversight of these standards will be maintained at establishment level, by the Establishment Licence Holder (PELH).

The NTCO should be sufficiently senior to influence others, make decisions, and lead on training issues within an establishment. They will ensure that training, supervision, competence assessment and continuing professional development are undertaken and recorded.

In some establishments, the NTCO may not be directly involved themselves in the delivery or assessment of training or competency (in which case their role will be to ensure appropriate delivery of the requirements). Practical responsibilities in these cases are delegated to experienced practitioners who are themselves competent to train (and/or assess) the necessary techniques.

Trainers/supervisors may be personal or project licence holders, members of the animal care staff or a veterinarian. These people will make direct contributions to training/supervision/assessment of trainees and animal care staff. Trainers/assessors/supervisors will be selected according to their expertise and competence in their day-to-day work as well as on their ability to teach the technique(s).

The project licence holder is responsible for providing appropriate levels of supervision for all personal licensees carrying out procedures, but the systems and record keeping for this should comply with the local establishment systems which have been set up by the NTCO. The AWERB should be aware of any standard procedures and practices for training within the establishment, and there may be a role for the AWERB in the development, establishment and revision of these.

Setting local standards

The NTCO role holder should set local standards for training, supervision, competency and continuing professional development which meet national (and EU) expectations.

Identifying who needs training

Chapter 9 of the Guidance details the UK requirements for training. These should be understood in detail by the NTCO.

The initial training requirements vary for:

- Personal Licence Holders (PILH) - those carrying out procedures
- Project Licence Holders (PPLH) - those responsible for designing projects and studies, who may and may not be personal licence holders
- Those taking care of animals* (from a Trainee Animal Technician, through to Animal Technician and then to becoming a Registered Animal Technologist (RAnTech))
- People involved in the humane killing of animals.

* Not all animal care staff will undergo Institute of Animal Technology (IAT) training, but local training systems should be in place and properly documented so that it is clear they have been appropriately trained and assessed as competent in relevant practices before an animal carer is

permitted to be responsible for animals. Development and administration of such local training systems are the responsibility of the NTCO.

What standards should be met?

The standards for initial training of personal and project licence holders (when undertaken in the UK) are set by the Accrediting Bodies. At present these are the Scottish Accreditation Board, the Royal Society of Biology and the Universities Accreditation and Quality Audit Group. Accredited training for animal carers, including NACWOs can be accessed via the IAT. All of these accredited courses will provide standard, specific and clear format certificates of successful completion of modules. The NTCO should be able to recognise training certificates from these accrediting bodies.

Identifying training needs

The NTCO will need to develop mechanisms to identify where there are new training needs, for example new procedures or species. They should also identify triggers for re-training or re-assessment, such as poor surgical outcomes or where a technique is not used for a prolonged period. The NTCO should also develop systems for routine re-assessment. Approaches to training should be sufficiently flexible to accommodate differing individual skills and needs.

Different approaches to training/ assessment of competence may be required. Full use should be made of local skills and knowledge, including involving others such as NACWOs, NVSs and the AWERB where appropriate. The AWERB has the task of establishing and reviewing management and operational processes for monitoring, reporting and follow up in relation to the welfare of animals housed or used in the licensed establishment. Training and competence are essential to good welfare and therefore the AWERB is expected to have oversight/review the provision of training.

The NTCO is responsible for ensuring that mechanisms are in place to identify new trainees. Good communication systems will need to be in place with NACWOs, Project Licence holders etc. to ensure that new personnel are identified (preferably prior to their arrival) so that efficient and appropriately tailored systems can be put in place such that training requirements do not hold up their work unnecessarily.

A system should be in place to ensure that training, supervision and competence standards are met for animal care staff. Whilst some may go through formal IAT training, local training will also occur. Formal recording of this will be required so that the relevant trained person takes responsibility for the animals' care. The NTCO will be responsible for ensuring that this process complies with local and ASPA Guidance requirements.

Killing of animals

All those who kill animals should have satisfactorily completed appropriate training, whether the killing method is one authorised within a project licence, by Schedule 1, or on the PEL. Involvement of the NVS may be particularly helpful in considering killing methods. The Learning Outcomes described in EU Education and Training Framework - Module 6 must be achieved by the trainees before undertaking killing unsupervised.

If no personal licence is required for the individual performing the killing (e.g. only Schedule 1 methods are being used), there is no requirement to complete an accredited course, but all individuals should be trained and competent. Specifically, a local module which complies

with the requirements of Module 6.3 will need to be developed and appropriate trainers and assessors identified, unless training to cover this module is provided elsewhere/in another way. Personal training records of competence in each of the (species and stage dependent) Schedule 1 killing methods will need to be devised and kept. Those trained in Schedule 1 and other methods should be listed on the Schedule 1 register held within the establishment (Section 2C Establishment Licence (PEL) condition 2)). Records should indicate the methods in which they have been trained and assessed as competent and for which species/stage of development. The format for these records and the system of completion and maintenance will need to be agreed internally and approved by the establishment licence holder. These will often be maintained by the NTCO (or the HOLC) on behalf of the PELH.

Exemptions

The NTCO may be asked about exemptions from training. They may use Home Office documents to understand what exemptions may be applied, but other than for predefined described circumstances they should consult with their Home Office Inspector to obtain a final decision on the acceptability of the exemption request.

The NTCO and ASPeL

The NTCO has a role in the ASPeL process for approving personal licence applications. The NTCO is responsible for verifying and confirming that the applicant's training details are accurate and for signing off all PIL applications which are submitted in the system. The NTCO should declare:

- I confirm that the applicant has the necessary modular training and/or equivalent current personal licence authority that permits the conduct of regulated procedures and use of animals described in Section 6 and 7 of this form.
- I have seen the original certificates as detailed in Section 6 of this application for a personal licence and a copy of these resides in the applicant's personal and/or training folder and will be maintained as long as that licence is extant at the establishment, and then provided to the licensee upon departure.
- I confirm that I have knowledge of the education, training, experience and character of the applicant.
- The applicant has a command of English sufficient for him/her to understand the terms and conditions under which (s)he may hold a licence under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which have been explained to him/her.
- I understand that I may be guilty of an offence if for the purpose of assisting another person to obtain a licence under this Act I furnish information which I know to be false or misleading in a material particular or recklessly furnish information which is false or misleading in a material particular.

In large institutions the NTCO is likely to rely on information from the PPL holder regarding things such as the applicant's character and command of English for example and local systems may be put in place to confirm and record such details.

The NTCO should also ensure that applicants tick the box on the PIL application to allow the Establishment to revoke their licence. This will allow the HOLC on behalf of the PELH to revoke their licence, if necessary.

Applying local standards

The key ongoing role for the NTCO is in ensuring compliance with the standards set by the institution for supervision, competence and CPD for each of the functions of animal care staff, personal licence holders, project licence holders and Named Persons as laid out in European Directive 2010/63/EU (Article 23.2a-d and 24) and the ASPA (2C.5).

How the system is delivered will depend on the nature of the NTCO's role within the establishment. If this role is solely a management/administrative role, then direct involvement in training/supervision/assessment will not occur. However, whether or not they are directly involved in the provision of training, the NTCO will need to oversee the process of training, supervision, competence and CPD for all members of staff involved with ASPA within the establishment. This includes making sure that a consistent approach is being adopted and delivered by and for all staff.

Identifying appropriate training and trainers

A list of EU and UK associations and accrediting bodies providing information and guidance may be found at the end of this document.

The NTCO should be able to assist trainees to identify and to attend appropriate training. For new trainees, this will involve knowing which modules are required, and where species-specific modules of acceptable quality are available and how to book them. They may collect and collate feedback from previous attendees to select the best courses. It is important to use properly trained trainers who use modern practices with optimised animal welfare appropriate to the required science as a key outcome.

On completion, the NTCO will need to see and check evidence of training certificate(s) to ensure successful completion of all required modules.

Once the trainee has a personal licence, the NTCO will need to work with the project licence holder, to be able themselves, or in communication with others such as NACWO and NVS, to identify possible trainers for procedures/techniques. NTCOs are responsible for communicating requirements/expectations to trainers, supervisors and trainees and for ensuring that staff are aware of their individual responsibilities within the local system.

The NTCO will need to make sure that new training needs are being identified as science develops, or as new species are brought in to the establishment. Local mechanisms and procedures should be regularly reviewed to ensure that these are being identified. Issues arising where there is doubt or evidence of failure to maintain competence need to be dealt with promptly and in accordance with set local procedures.

When triggers such as poor surgical outcomes or acute increases in animal mortality rates are identified, the NTCO should be involved in reviewing these, devising refresher training when required, and ensuring it is completed and recorded. Investigations and follow-up should largely be on a no-blame basis, as additional training and supervision will often resolve the issue. Outcomes need to optimise animal welfare and reduce animal wastage and should be reported to the AWEBB.

Record systems

Training records, for use throughout the establishment will need to be developed and agreed by all NTCOs when more than one person holds this post. A standard format will require approval by the PELH, who retains overall responsibility for the performance of the NTCO(s).

Examples of training records that comply with the legislation can be found in the LASA Guiding Principles for Supervision and Assessment of Competence (<http://www.lasa.co.uk/publications.html>), but other compliance systems will also be acceptable, where it is clear what training has been done, what further training/supervision is required and what techniques a person is competent to perform.

Records can be paper or electronic. If electronic, the system may be local bespoke or purchased from one of the systems commercially available. Records should be readily available on request and accessible by all relevant staff, including the Home Office Inspector. Copies of training certificates should be retained within an individual's training records but may also be held by the establishment in a centralised electronic/paper filing system.

As there should be an ability to extract relevant information/records if the member of staff moves to another establishment, staff should have access to and be responsible for their own records. However, the Data Protection Act and establishment in-house policies may need to be considered and followed. The NTCO will need to be proactive in checking the accuracy of the records provided by a new employee.

It might be valuable to discuss any proposed overlap of personal and project licence records, and Schedule 1 list with the relevant Home Office Inspector. If records have dual purpose, specific relevant extracts for the different purposes would normally be expected to be easily obtainable by those required to keep records.

Keeping records up-to-date

The NTCO will be responsible for ensuring that all records are complete, accurate and up-to-date. Records should be kept up-to-date by the trainees themselves, in collaboration with their trainer and/or competence assessor and supervisor, as appropriate. The NTCO will need to review and check the records at a frequency which encourages trainees and trained people to apply the local standards. With an effective recording system and staff engagement and support, the Home Office Inspector should be unlikely to find out-of-date, inaccurate or incomplete records. The NTCO may keep the original records, or may have ready access to them. They should generally be available at all times to the NTCO whether or not the "owner" is on site.

When individuals transfer from other establishments the NTCO will be responsible, in collaboration with the project licence holder, for checking and verifying training records and identifying any new training which might be required. Reassessment of competence of the procedures within the training record, when these are first performed after the person has started at the new Establishment, is strongly recommended, in order to verify skills.

The NTCO is likely to be involved in maintaining an up-to-date list of those competent to kill by Schedule 1 methods on behalf of the PELH as required by Section 2C Establishment Licence (PEL) condition 2. This will involve identifying new staff and ensuring they are trained and supervised, and removing staff from the list who have left, or who, for whatever reason, are no longer competent.

Supervision & Competence Assessment

Supervision of personal licensees remains the responsibility of the project licence holder (PPL condition 6). As well as ensuring consistent quality of training and assessment of competence, the NTCO has a role in ensuring supervision is adequate across the establishment. It is expected that the NTCO will work with project licence holders to ensure that all personal licence holders working unsupervised are competent and that their individual records detail this information.

Competence assessment should be objective preferably using an alternative assessor to the trainer. For specialist techniques consideration should be given to finding others outside the establishment already competent or if this is not practicable, to defining and reviewing outcomes in these cases, usually with the NVS.

The EU Education and Training Framework document (p13) provides helpful suggestions relating to supervision. The LASA Guiding Principles for Supervision and Assessment of Competence³ will also be of help.

CPD

The Establishment should develop a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) strategy for all relevant staff.

CPD will need to be used to ensure currency in techniques and that good practice is understood and followed as far as is practicable. CPD should cover 3Rs issues as well as animal welfare and science at an appropriate level. The NTCO should become aware of, or be notified by NIO or others of opportunities/activities for education, training and CPD relevant to ASPA work. They should be able to identify relevant personnel and disseminate information to them and encourage attendance. Where there are budgetary constraints or more potential attendees than places available, involvement of PELH, other managers, other named people and/or the AWERB may be helpful in decision making.

The NTCO will need to review records perhaps in collaboration with supervisors/managers, to confirm that CPD (in science, animal welfare and 3Rs) is achieved and clearly recorded. Most people have an annual review of performance, which may be used as a trigger to review these records. Regular reviews during performance of procedures and review of records can help identify good practice for dissemination and issues where further advice or assistance may improve outcomes.

Informal reviews and reporting by all staff involved who see procedures and outcomes can assist the NTCO in achieving the desired goals. Other PILHs, NACWOs, animal care staff, PPLHs, other NACWOs and NVSs may have a role in assisting the NTCO. Good communications with these people should be maintained.

The NTCO should work with the AWERB to develop and monitor annual CPD strategy/ opportunities for staff. The AWERB can have a significant role in identifying issues requiring CPD, especially when it reviews unexpected adverse events.

³http://www.lasa.co.uk/LASA_GP_Supervision_&_Competence_2013_final.pdf

Review

Regular review of the effectiveness of this role is critical to ensure that the function is being delivered effectively. As part of such a review it is essential for the PELH to obtain feedback from all relevant staff. Those whose opinions should be sought, as they are expected to have regular interaction with the post holder include, PPLHs, PILHs, animal care staff, NACWO(s), NVS(s), PELH and AWERB members.

Communications

Good internal communications are essential between the NTCO and all in the establishment.

Regular communication with the PELH is important and required by Section 2C Establishment Licence (PEL) condition 21. There should be a two-way flow of information so that expectations are clear and that it is evident whether or not these expectations are being met.

External communication streams should be in place with training organisations, other licensed establishments, Home Office, and relevant external organisations such as the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), Laboratory Animal Science Association (LASA), Institute of Animal Technology (IAT), Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association (LAVA), Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and Understanding Animal Research (UAR). Communication with external colleagues through Named Persons' Groups such as email discussion groups and/or attendance at meetings set up by the various detailed above is strongly recommended.

Training for a NTCO

What are the qualities of a good NTCO?

It will be clear that to be an effective NTCO you will need to be approachable with very good communication skills, good organisational skills, including data management, sound judgment, and an ability to manage time and people.

What does an NTCO need to know and understand?

- The ASPA legislation, and relevant sections (in detail) of the Guidance, along with how the regulations are implemented in practice;
- Issues around the ethics of animal use in science;
- The Three Rs and how these can be fully implemented in your establishment;
- How the research processes and structures work in your establishment;
- Relevant institutional policies in detail;
- Principles of the local research programs;
- The national training and supervision requirements;
- Where to access appropriate training in a timely manner for scientific and care staff;
- How to manage confidential data, including legal obligations;
- Good computer skills;
- In some circumstances it will be helpful to understand EU related requirements, e.g. for experienced scientists coming from abroad, and to keep abreast of training developments within the EU e.g. the Education and Training Platform for Laboratory Animal Science - www.etplas.eu.

Initial training for NTCOs

Many NTCOs will have already been involved with the ASPA system and will have completed formal training in their previous posts. Where a prospective post holder is already actively involved in the delivery of training, supervision or competence assessment, there may be no additional training needs.

For those involved in a more administrative role (e.g. the coordination, confirmation and recording of training), or those without prior training then some training will be necessary in order to properly perform the role. Such training is strongly recommended under Home Office requirements.

As a minimum, NTCOs should have undertaken:

- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 1: Legislative framework;
- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 2: Ethics, animal welfare and the three Rs (Level 1);
- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 50: Introduction to the local environment (establishment).

They should also have good knowledge of:

- ASPA Guidance - with detailed understanding of Chapters 8, 9, 10;
- EU Education and Training Framework (in general);
- Local processes relating to the Home Office licensing process for licence applications, amendments, standard exemptions, etc;
- Knowledge of the species and procedures used within their establishment.

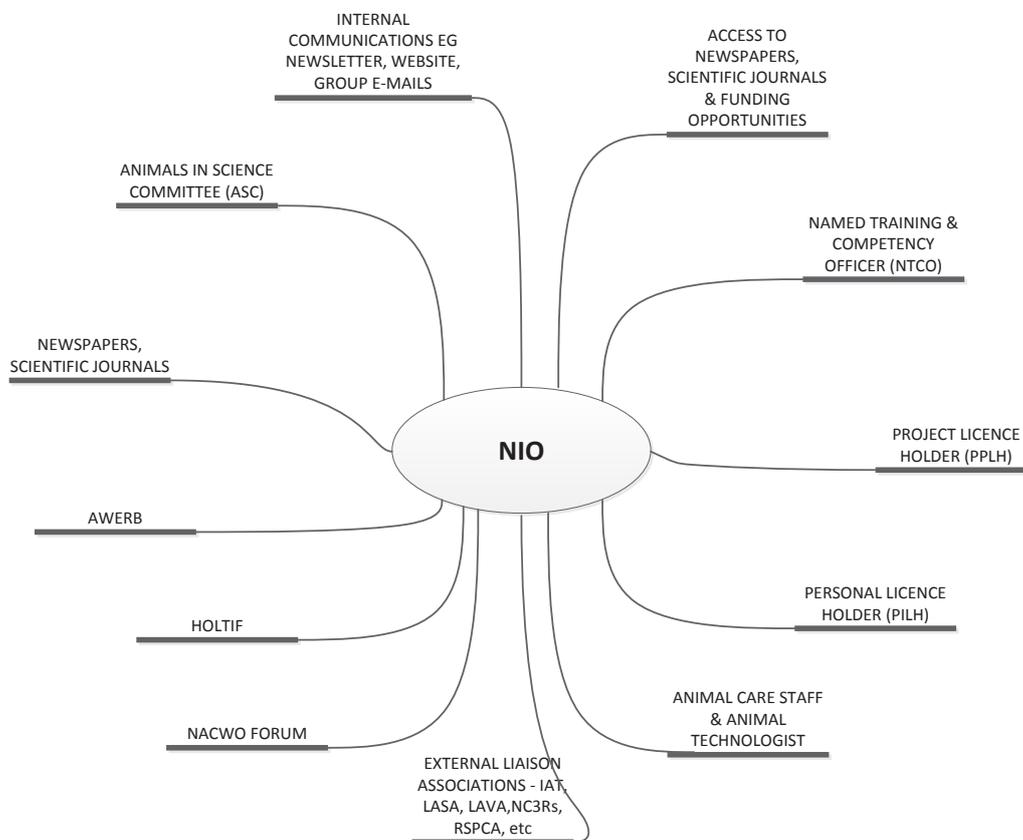
Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for NTCOs

- Remain up-to-date on developments in education and training on laboratory animal science and welfare;
- Follow the activities of the EU Education and Training Platform for Laboratory Animal Science;
- Maintain a basic understanding of teaching principles where training forms a part of the core role;
- Maintain awareness of new methodologies and/or people who can assist in the delivery of training;
- Attend Train the Trainers day (optional);
- Attend meetings of relevance provided by LASA, LAVA, IAT, NC3Rs, RSPCA, UFAW etc.
- Those NTCOs not already directly involved in training should visit the animal facilities.

Named Information Officer (NIO)

What is the job? What are the responsibilities?

Interactions of the NIO



The Establishment Licence holder should support the role of the Named Information Officer to determine **HOW** the requirements set out by the Home Office (see the Guidance - Chapter 8.10) can be achieved efficiently and effectively. **The role needs to be properly resourced and supported by senior management.**

The Named Information Officer (NIO) is responsible for ensuring that those dealing with animals in the establishment have access to information they need about the species held there and procedures being performed.

Core Role:

- Setting up information systems
- Applying the systems
- Review

The NIO will be involved in the co-ordination of access to information to those dealing with animals in the establishment, making sure they have access to information they need about the species held there and procedures being performed, and to other information they require.

Who is the NIO?

NIOs may be administrators, or may come from a science or technical background. In some cases, the person will be familiar with some of the information, but it is unlikely that any NIO will have a full understanding of all the information required by all relevant personnel within the establishment. However, systems should be put in place to ensure that up-to-date information relevant to the needs of individuals dealing with animals is readily available.

The role may be combined with that of the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO), Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC), Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO), and/or Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS). In some cases, the Establishment Licence Holder (PELH) may choose to retain the role. The AWERB members may contribute significantly in assisting the NIO to meet the requirements of the role.

There will need to be active involvement with the AWERB, generally by being a full member, to ensure that there is adequate communication and support for the role.

Setting up information systems

The NIO role provides focussed dissemination of information. To do this the NIO needs to determine who needs the information, and provide it efficiently, in a format which the person needing the information can use (including the appropriate level for knowledge/skills), being aware that different groups may respond to different approaches, and being able to adapt accordingly.

They will need to be able to provide guidance on where and how to search for information, or who to speak to, to enable such information to be accessed.

The NIO should be able to assist Project Licence applicants and/or personal licensees to find or search for information, or to be able to identify a specialist to assist - but they do not necessarily need to understand the key findings from such a search.

The PELH needs to ensure adequate liaison between named people (Section 2C Establishment Licence (PEL) condition 21)). The NIO will need to take an active part to ensure that their contribution is effective, and is in line with what is required by the PELH. Such liaison usually includes regular face to face communication at an agreed frequency depending on the size of establishment and local expectations/requirements for the role. It will also rely on having access to good communication tools.

The NIO should be in position to disseminate key information to the right people in a timely manner; generally, this would be in an electronic format. A system of focussed communication will be required e.g. notification of new starts to relevant people, and after receipt of Home Office communications.

It is imperative that the NIO is on the ASRU email circulation list to receive their regular newsletters. To receive the relevant mailings NIOs should contact ASRU Business Support by email - ASRUBusiness@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Applying the Systems

What information to provide

Information may be provided in hard copy or electronic format and is likely to include:

- ASPA - legislation and Guidance on the Act;
- Local rules and information:
 1. Facility handbooks;
 2. Local training module (EU Education and Training Framework document - Module 50);
- Information on the biology, behaviour and welfare needs of the species used at the establishment;
- Information on how to provide appropriate animal care and husbandry and promoting good animal welfare, Information should include minimum standards, but recognises that these are minimum standards, and therefore provide in addition suggested good practice. This should be done in close collaboration with NACWOs, and is likely to include:
 1. Code of Practice on the Housing and Care of Animals;
 2. Relevant DEFRA Codes;
 3. Specialist books on species held, particularly those relevant to scientific use of animals e.g. the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) 'Handbook on the care and management of laboratory animals', the IAT 'Manual of Animal Technology';
 4. Refereed journals that publish papers on animal behaviour, welfare and refinement, e.g. Laboratory Animals, Animal Technology and Welfare, Applied Animal Behaviour Science and Public Library of Science (PLoS);
 5. Contacts at centres where behaviour and welfare research is conducted.
- Information on implementing the 3Rs including:
 1. Relevant guiding principles for good practice (e.g. LASA, LAVA, IAT, NC3Rs (inc. the 'ARRIVE' guidelines), RSPCA);
 2. Publications relating to new scientific initiatives, technical advances
 3. Links to websites/databases such as NC3Rs, Go3Rs, ECVAM, Pubmed, Altweb, NORINA etc.
- Good practice relevant to types of work at the establishment e.g.:
 1. Standard dosing/sampling websites;
 2. Aseptic technique documents;
 3. Assessing welfare/severity;
 4. Outcomes of retrospective assessment, with lessons learnt, good and bad.
- Information on AWERB membership, functions and its outcomes;
- Home Office newsletters & other communications;
- Reports and other publications produced by the Animals In Science Committee (ASC) (and its predecessor, the Animals Procedures Committee -APC);
- Details of meetings/conferences/events where such information may be exchanged and a list of staff within the establishment to whom they may be relevant;
- Reports from staff after attendance at meetings/conferences.

Who to provide information to

To avoid information overload, information will need to be disseminated selectively and appropriately to:

- PPL holders;
- PIL holders;
- Specific research/interest groups (e.g. species, research field);
- Named People;
- Animal care staff;
- Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body members;

The NIO may also be a channel for communicating information to others including:

- External groups e.g. LASA/LAVA/IAT/NC3Rs/RSPCA/UFAW;
- Home Office (e.g. Inspectors);
- Animals in Science Committee (ASC).

How to provide information

The methods used to disseminate information should facilitate access while reducing or avoiding information overload. They may include having a central repository for information that can be accessed by all concerned e.g. an intranet. The NIO will need to make sure that logical and intuitive subdivisions and “filing” are used to make access easy, and that version control management is used (e.g. using clearly dated pdfs), and to purge/delete/archive out-of-date or superseded documents.

The use of e-mails can notify appropriate recipients of new relevant content. These should be brief and be directed only to relevant people. When sending papers or other information it may be helpful to summarise important points and use links to detail/documents/websites rather than duplicating other information.

Face-to-face meetings on specific issues with particular individuals or groups allow discussion as well as imparting of information. 3Rs focussed journal club meetings between scientific groups and scientist - animal care staff meetings can facilitate information dissemination.

The NIO should report into the AWERB e.g. by formal report of relevant activities through a standing agenda item. The NIO is likely to be involved in collating and disseminating relevant information from the meetings. This may involve reviewing AWERB and subgroup minutes to pick out individual packets of relevant information and then directing information out to relevant personnel.

NIOs can play a role in retrospective reviews by collating findings of interest to others and disseminating improved practices internally and externally.

Review

Regular review of the effectiveness of this role is critical to ensure that the function is being delivered effectively. As part of such a review it is essential for the PELH to obtain feedback from all relevant staff. Those whose opinions should be sought, as they are expected to have regular interaction with the post holder include, PPLHs, PILHs, animal care staff, NACWO(s), NVS(s), PELH and AWERB members.

Training for an NIO

What are the qualities of a good NIO?

The person responsible for dissemination of information should be someone who actively seeks information from other people, by pro-actively asking others to pass the information to him/her, collects and collates information, and then enables others to access it.

To be an effective NIO you will need to have good communication and networking skills and be a facilitator. You will need to be computer literate and well organised to ensure that the relevant information is available to those that need it, when they need it.

You will need to know where to find current information on the 3Rs, including through networking or self-learning.

You will need to:

- Understand the main provisions of the ASPA legislation (including Guidance, Advice Notes and the Code of Practice on Housing and Care);
- Be familiar with the species used and the types of research performed in the establishment;
- Actively seek relevant information to disseminate, not just react to information requests;
- Proactively make and maintain contacts for information sharing externally:
 1. Home Office
 2. Specialist groups and bodies such as the ASC, IAT, LASA, LAVA, NC3Rs, UAR and animal welfare organisations;
 3. Local contacts such as named people, research interests of local groups.

Initial Training for the NIO

Some NIOs will have already been involved in the ASPA system and will already have completed formal training in their previous posts, so there may be no additional training needed. For those involved in the role without prior training then training is recommended, although not obligatory under Home Office requirements. It is recommended that you complete at least the modular training in the legislation, ethics and 3Rs:

- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 1: Legislative framework;
- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 2: Ethics, animal welfare and the three Rs (Level 1); this will help to obtain an understanding of legal and ethical aspects of use of animals for scientific purposes and also covers the concepts and principles the 3Rs;
- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 50: Introduction to the local environment (establishment), which gives a good understanding of the local structure for management and responsibility relating to animal use at your establishment.
- EU Education and Training Framework also suggests that the NIO completes aspects of Module 51 - Information provision and retrieval. When such a module exists, if not completed before the post is taken up, then this will be valuable CPD within the first six months to a year depending on prior knowledge and skills, and extent of role and other local support.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for the NIO

A working knowledge of the contents of the following document from the European Commission will assist in the delivery of the outcomes required:

A working document on the availability of information on the Three Rs (2012).

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/3r/alternatives_information_en.htm

You may wish to extend your skills by:

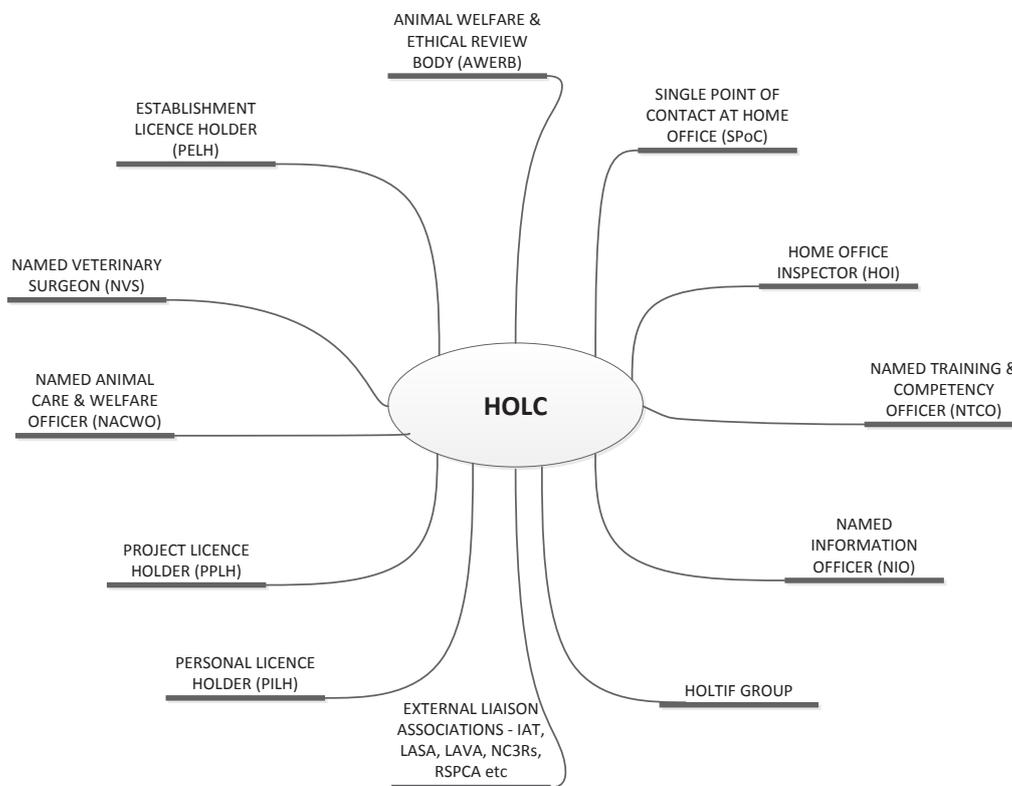
- Spending time reviewing the NC3Rs website and the links within it;
- Completing a suitable training module covering how to search, source, retrieve and store information; methods of searching; (e.g. see links to FRAME or SYRCLE in the References section);
- Receiving other training on information searching, storing and retrieval;
- Spending time in discussion with knowledge management experts (e.g. information technologists, librarians);
- Completing EU Education and Training Framework - Module 9: Ethics, Animal Welfare and the Three Rs (Level 2), a component of PPL training, which may be useful in extending the basic knowledge of ethics and legislation;

- Attending a specific NIO training course - if/when developed;
- Visiting animal facility(s);
- Attending topic specific LASA/LAVA/IAT/NC3Rs/RSPCA/UFAW meetings;
- Membership of HOLTIF and NIO discussion groups;
- Undertaking soft skill training;
 1. How to talk to people and influence them,
 2. Team-working
 3. Diplomacy

Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC)

What is the job? What are the responsibilities?

Interactions of the HOLC



The Establishment Licence holder should support the role of the HOLC to determine **HOW** their responsibilities can be achieved efficiently and effectively. The role needs to be properly resourced and supported by senior management.

The Home Office Liaison Contact (HOLC) is a non-statutory role that is not legally defined. It is a role strongly shaped by current Home Office working practices and policies. The HOLC acts as a key contact with the Home Office, liaising over licence applications and other matters. The HOLC receives all Home Office communications on behalf of the establishment licence holder and cascades those communications as appropriate to others in the establishment.

Core Role

- Communications
- Setting up systems
- ASPeL (including interactions between HOLC & NTCO)
- Applying the systems

Who is the HOLC?

The HOLC is the person within an establishment nominated to be the main liaison between the establishment and the Business Support and Licensing Team in the Home Office's Animals in Science Regulation Unit (ASRU). The HOLC may also be the first point of contact within an establishment for the Home Office Inspector.

The HOLC has an important role on ASPeL (Animals in Scientific Procedure e-Licensing) system (see below).

The role of HOLC may be combined with that of Named Information Officer (NIO), Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer (NACWO), Named Training and Competency Officer (NTCO), or Named Veterinary Surgeon (NVS).

The role requires that the HOLC liaise with, at a minimum, all licensed staff and prospective applicants in the Establishment to:

- Advise on licensing matters;
- Ensure a robust and efficient internal licensing application/amendment process;
- Setting up ASPeL logins;
- Deliver/support processes to ensure all licensees have access to relevant licences;
- Disseminate information regarding Returns of Procedures (ROPs) to all project licence holders;
- Co-ordinate sending back the ROPs to the Home Office;
- Pass Home Office communications to relevant person/persons if they are the key contact for these - this would specifically include to the NIO where information is of relevance to them;
- Ensure that delivery of key messages from ASRU newsletters are disseminated to relevant staff at the Establishment - this may be a function shared with/devolved to NIO.

Additional communication may be required with others, such as those on the Schedule 1 register, depending on the extent of the role given to the HOLC.

HOLCs may maintain and hold the following information on behalf of the PELH:

- Schedule of Premises;
- Details of NACWOs and other named people;
- Schedule 1 register.

In some cases, the HOLC may actively participate in the establishment's AWERB. They may be a full time member and may also fulfil the secretariat role.

Communications

Internal

Good internal communications are essential. There should be a two-way flow of information between the HOLC and applicants/licensees.

The HOLC is likely to perform most effectively within an establishment if they develop and nurture an effective working relationship with the PELH and the establishment's Named People. As such, regular communication with PELH may be of value, in particular when meetings of other named people occur.

External

Contact between the HOLC and the ASRU Licensing Team at the Home Office should normally be through the Establishment Single Point of Contact (SPoC), with whom the HOLC needs to develop and nurture an effective working relationship. Letters of introduction will be sent by the Home Office to new establishments, or when there is a change of SPoC, giving the contact name, telephone number and email address. HOLCs should participate in regular telephone calls from the Establishment SPoC (known internally at ASRU as “Field” welfare calls) to build up a relationship with the HOLC - this relationship will minimise and prevent licensing issues.

If there is any doubt as to the name of your SPoC at the Home Office, your local HOI will be able to advise. Alternatively contact may be made using the *aspa.london@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk* email address.

For any major issues or problems the Head of Licensing in ASRU should be contacted direct by email *aspa.london@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk* or telephone on 0207 035 3001.

HOLCs are encouraged to develop relationships with other HOLCs to open dialogue, share best practice and procedures that work well, for example movement of PIL holders between establishments.

The HOLTIF (Home Office Liaison, Training and Information Forum) can provide useful contacts and advice. Attendance at one of the regular HOLTIF meetings - the annual meeting hosted by LASA and the three meetings per year facilitated by the Home Office ASRU - is encouraged and recommended. Minutes and action points from the meeting are circulated to the HOLTIF group.

Developing links and engaging with other establishments and organisations e.g. NC3Rs, LASA, IAT, LAVA, RSPCA, UFAW may also be beneficial, but avoiding duplication of effort with Named People.

Setting up systems

As a secure e-mail account is strongly preferred by the Home Office, the HOLC should have a CJSM account. For instructions on how to apply for a CJSM account go to <https://www.cjasm.net/> or call the CJSM Helpdesk on 0870 010 8535 or email: cjasm.helpdesk@vodafone.com Please note that ASPeL and CJSM are not compatible.

It is likely that the HOLC will communicate regularly with the Home Office Inspectorate on administrative issues relating to licences, and occasionally on other matters e.g. ROPs.

It may be helpful for the HOLC to set up systems to track movements of PILHs wishing to work at a secondary location. This information should be passed to the NTCO and relevant PPLH at the establishment where work is to be carried out. This will allow the NTCO/PPLH for that establishment to check relevant licence authorities, ensure competency in the techniques to be carried out and provide training and supervision when necessary. HOLCs must ensure that shared information of a confidential nature is treated appropriately.

ASPeL (including interactions between HOLC & NTCO)

Three specific roles within an establishment are required to be registered for the ASPeL system in order for the system to operate. Details of the people in these roles should be submitted to

the Home Office on an ASPeL registration form in order for their ASPeL accounts to be set up. These are the:

- Establishment Licence holder (PELH) (and/or nominee);
- Named Training and Competency Officer/s (NTCO);
- Home Office Liaison Contact/s (HOLC).

See Annex 2 for the ASPeL Registration Form.

Only the PELH can delegate their responsibilities in ASPeL to a nominee.

The way the establishment operates the internal processes necessary to run and manage the system will, inevitably, vary due to the nature of people's other work within the institution and how they interact more generally with each other but the roles for these named people within the ASPeL system are clear.

The HOLC is responsible for submitting the following requests:

- Create PIL applicants;
- Create PPL applicants;
- Password log-ins and re-sets for applicants*;
- Block applicants;
- Unblock applicants;
- PIL licence revocations.

** HOLCs should advise licence holders that if they are locked out of ASPeL they should contact their local HOLC for it to be reset - not ASRU. Once reset they will be sent an email link. Their username remains the same but they will need to set a new password.*

Requesting individual user accounts to be set up in the system is done by the HOLC logging onto ASPeL, selecting "Tasks: Manage Users" and entering the new applicant's e-mail address (this e-mail address will be permanently associated with the user's account and can only be changed by contacting ASPeL support). After this the applicant will receive a one-time only link to enable them to finish setting up their account. Other actions are done in the same way by the HOLC selecting one of the options under "Tasks".

At the same time as setting the new applicant up with an ASPeL account the HOLC will need to provide the applicant with the Establishment 'Shared Key', which is required for access.

Once PIL or PPL accounts have been set up the HOLC will receive notifications when a PIL application has been endorsed by the NTCO, when a PPL application has been endorsed by the PELH (or nominee), if amendment or further information relating to the application is required and when the licence has been granted.

The HOLC will also receive the granted PDF personal and project licences from the Home Office and is responsible for forwarding this to the personal or project licensee. Local responsibilities relating to ASPeL applications and Home Office licences are likely to include keeping any local records that need to be maintained and informing specific colleagues, such as the NTCO, NACWO, NVS and PPL holder, for example, when a new licence has been granted or an existing licence amended. Again this will vary subject to local arrangements.

The NTCO is responsible for verifying and confirming that the applicant's training details are accurate and for signing off all PIL applications which are submitted in the system.

The PELH's role in ASPeL is to sign off any project licence applications after they have been considered by and received approval of the local AWERB. Again, robust and structured local processes will be needed in order to run, manage and record the AWERB's input and to check PPL applications prior to their final submission in ASPeL. The way that local processes (which have to be run outside the ASPeL system) involve the HOLC and NTCO will vary.

For enquiries relating to ASPeL the email address for the Home Office is *ASPELQueries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk* or telephone 0207 035 4469.

Applying the Systems

Once developed the systems should be kept under review to ensure efficiency and to identify places where improvements can be made if required. Where urgent applications or exemptions are required, these may need to be negotiated and/or explained to the SPoC/HOI in some cases to reprioritise other establishment work to allow for this.

Training for the HOLC

What are the qualities of a good HOLC?

It will be clear that to be an effective HOLC you will need to be organised so that application and amendment systems run efficiently and effectively. You will need to have good communication skills and ideally be a facilitator. You will need to be computer literate.

You will need to:

- Be familiar with the main provisions of ASPA legislation;
- Be aware where to find relevant information in sections of the Guidance;
- Have a detailed knowledge of ASPeL Guidance and application and amendment processes;
- Make contacts internally;
 1. PELH
 2. NVS
 3. NTCO
 4. NIO
 5. NACWO
 6. AWERB Members
- Make contacts externally;
 1. Home Office Licensing SPoC
 2. Home Office Inspector

Initial training

Some HOLCs will have already been involved in the ASPA system and will already have completed formal training in their previous posts, so there may be no additional training needed. For those involved in the role without prior training then training is recommended although not obligatory under Home Office requirements.

It is recommended that you complete at least the modular training in the legislation, ethics and 3Rs.

- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 1: Legislative framework;
- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 2: Ethics, animal welfare and the three Rs (Level 1); this will help to obtain an understanding of legal and ethical aspects of use of animals for scientific purposes and also covers the concepts and principles the 3Rs;
- EU Education and Training Framework - Module 50: Introduction to the local environment (establishment), which gives a good understanding of the local structure for management and responsibility relating to animal use at your establishment

The following will also be of benefit:

- Working knowledge of the Guidance to the ASPA;
- Awareness of other relevant documents and where to find them eg Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals Bred, Supplied or Used for Scientific Purposes; ASRU Advice Notes
- Collaboration with other HOLCs and contact with Home Office licensing staff if required to develop an in depth working knowledge of ASPeL;
- There will be value in visiting the establishment facilities to develop knowledge and understanding of work conducted at the establishment.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Involvement with staff on a day to day basis will allow you to work to develop and maintain effective working relationships with staff and to extend your knowledge of local working groups that involve relevant personnel, e.g. AWERB, NACWO meetings.

Regular attendance at HOLTIF meetings and / or reading outputs from these will be of value.

Reviewing / reading all Home Office communications will be necessary.

References

Home Office

Animals in Science Regulation Unit

www.gov.uk/guidance/research-and-testing-using-animals#animals-scientific-procedures-act-1986

Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

www.gov.uk/government/publications/consolidated-version-of-aspa-1986

ASPeL User Guidance

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/356377/AASPeL_User_Guidance_140903_v1.2.pdf

CJSM

<https://www.cjasm.net/>

Code of Practice for the Housing and Care of Animals Bred, Supplied or Used for Scientific Purposes

www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-practice-for-the-housing-and-care-of-animals-bred-supplied-or-used-for-scientific-purposes

Guidance on the Operation of the (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986

www.gov.uk/government/publications/operation-of-aspa

European Commission

Animals used for scientific purposes

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/home_en.htm

Guidance documents

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/pubs_guidance_en.htm

Including:

- A working document on the availability of information on the Three Rs (2012)
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/3r/alternatives_information_en.htm
- A working document on the development of a common education and training framework (2014)
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/chemicals/lab_animals/pdf/Endorsed_E-T.pdf

Other

ARRIVE Guidelines (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments)
www.nc3rs.org.uk/ARRIVE

FELASA
www.felasa.eu

FRAME
www.frame.org.uk

HOLTIF GROUP contact LASA Secretariat for further details
www.lasa.co.uk

IAT (including Guidance Notes on the Role of the Named Animal Care and Welfare Officer - NACWO)
www.iat.org.uk
http://media.wix.com/ugd/a30180_ac2bf074b389438588e365d40a3aa9e0.pdf

LASA (including Guiding Principles for Supervision and Assessment of Competence as required under EU and UK Legislation)
www.lasa.co.uk

LASA/RSPCA Guiding Principles on Good Practice for Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (2015 - 3rd Edition)
<http://tinyurl.com/RSPCA-LASA-AWERB>

NC3Rs
www.nc3rs.org.uk

Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons - Code of Professional Conduct
<http://www.rcvs.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/code-of-professional-conduct-for-veterinary-surgeons/supporting-guidance/named-veterinary-surgeons>

RSPCA
<http://science.rspca.org.uk/sciencegroup/researchanimals/reportsandresources>

SYRCLE
<https://www.radboudumc.nl/Research/Organisationofresearch/Departments/cdl/SYRCLE/Pages/default.aspx>

Training

Training courses are currently accredited by the following organisations:

Royal Society of Biology - Accreditation Board
www.rsb.org.uk

IAT
www.iat.org.uk

FELASA
www.felasa.eu/accreditation-boards/accreditation-board-for-education-and-training1/felasa-accredited-courses2/

Scottish Accreditation Board - ScotPil courses
SAB.CompanySecretary@gmail.co

Universities Accreditation Group - Universities Training Group courses
[c/o h.o.admin@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:c/o.h.o.admin@leeds.ac.uk)

Many organisations offer in-house modular courses. For more information please contact the accrediting bodies or contact the LASA and LAVA Secretariats. Details of courses also appear in the LASA Forum.

Commercial courses available from companies in the UK include the following:

Charles River Insourcing Solutions (formally BioScientific Events)
www.criver.com/uktraining

The Learning Curve
www.learningcurvedevelopment.co.uk

Red Kite Veterinary Consultants
www.redkitevets.co.uk

Figure 5: Training for other Named Persons

EU module		New UK module	Function				
			PEL holder/NPRC	NVS	NACWO	NTCO	NIO
1. National legislation		L	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Recommended
2. Ethics, Animal welfare & the 3Rs (level 1)		E1	Recommended	Mandatory	Mandatory	Recommended	Recommended
3.1. Basic and Appropriate Biology – Species Specific (theory)		PILA (theory) (sp specific)		As appropriate	Mandatory		
4. Animal Care, Health and Management – Species Specific							
5. Recognition of Pain, Suffering and Distress – Species Specific				As appropriate	Mandatory		
7. Minimally Invasive Procedures Without Anaesthesia – Species Specific (theory)				As appropriate	Mandatory		
3.2. Basic and Appropriate Biology – Species Specific (practical)		PILB			As appropriate		
8. Minimally Invasive Procedures Without Anaesthesia – Species Specific (skills)		PILC			As appropriate		
20. Anaesthesia for Minor Procedures							
21. Anaesthesia, Advanced e.g. for Surgical Procedures							
22. Principles of Surgery							
6.1. Humane Methods of Killing (theory)		K (theory)		Mandatory	Mandatory		
6.2. Humane Methods of Killing (skills)		K (skills) (sp specific)			Recommended		
9. Ethics, Animal Welfare and the 3Rs (level 2)		E2		Mandatory	Mandatory		Recommended
10. Experimental Design		PPL		Recommended	Recommended		
11. Design and Management of Procedures and Projects							
23. Animal Husbandry, Care and Enrichment Practices		NACWO			Mandatory		
24. Designated veterinarian		NVS		Mandatory			
30. Introduction to the local environment		Local	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended



Home Office

ASPeL User Account Request Form

Establishment Name		
Establishment Licence Number (PEL Number)		

Role e.g. HOLC, NTCO PELH PELH delegate	Name	Email Address	Telephone Number
Email Account where granted licences are to be sent			



Laboratory Animal Science Association
Laboratory Animals Veterinary Association
Institute of Animal Technology

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